WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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A RADICAL MISTAKE.

It has been the constant testimony of this magazine that the source of the present confusion in the theology of the Church, and of her bewilderment in the attempt to revise it, is the misconception into which she long ago fell of the fundamental doctrine in the Christian faith—the resurrection of the dead. The Bible connects all its hope for the

redemption of mankind with the Divine provision to raise the dead. God's method of redemption is through resurrection. But, as applied to the case of the majority of mankind who have hitherto lived, resurrection has been perverted into a prelude to damnation. All thought of mercy toward any class of the dead but saints (and perhaps infants and idiots) has been shut out from this purpose of God to restore the dead. What was given by God as His great boon to the race, the proclamation of which was to be glad tidings of great joy to all people, becomes thus to the larger portion of the race an untold multiplication of their misery, an enormous disaster, an unspeakable curse.

This fatal mistake in the traditional theology has vitiated the whole of it. It has given us a false doctrine of God, by which He is represented as at enmity with His own works, and in which Justice and Love are viewed as opposing attributes in the divine nature with variant claims; a false doctrine of His government, in that sovereignty is made the spring and centre of it to the obscuration of His love; a false doctrine of Christ, by which He is made a bargaining person in the Godhead, rather than the Divine-Human Revealer of the love and kindness of God our Father toward man; a false doctrine of the atonement, by which the government of God is represented as capricious, imposing penalties whose execution it intended to prevent, dooming the sinner to the enormously exaggerated penalty of an eternal hell, and arranging a way of escape from the just consequences of his sins by the substituted payment of an enormous ransom, thus perverting God's gracious provision for the re-

mission of sins into a device for the remission of just penalties; a false doctrine of election, in that the loving purpose of God in choosing a first-fruits company to be heirs of salvation is made to terminate upon themselves, the rest of mankind being left to suffer in endless misery, thus denying that "first-fruits" implies an ultimate harvest, and that a purpose of mercy toward the later born lies behind the choice of "the Church of the first-born."

This radical mistake has led also to a false doctrine of regeneration, which is viewed as the impartation to man of a life to which he is an alien by birth, rather than the quickening within him of a life of which he has already the germ, for no new life can be born unless there be a germ receptive of it; a false doctrine of salvation, which views it as the rescue from everlasting damnation of the false personality grafted on to the root of man's true being, which evil form of manhood is not worth saving, and was never meant to be saved—rather than as the deliverance of the divine nature, the true self in man, from the evils that obstruct its progress to perfect personal expression. And hence, finally, there has arisen a false doctrine of the Church, by which she has come to view herself as the official barterer in the souls and destinies of men, rather than as the divine organism through which the Christ-nature is begotten and formed in men as the power of a righteous life and the hope of glory.

NOT all resurrections are the resurrection of life, though in the end they will be found, even to the lowest birth of the power of the enemy, to have contributed thereto.—*Geo. Macdonald in Paul Faber, Ch. XXX.*

EXPLANATORY.

The following letter has reached us from a valued friend and subscriber. We publish it entire, with its appended list of hard questions, to which we make reply as best we can :

8 Bigg Market, Newcastle-on-Tyne, December 21st, 1891.

Dear Brother Baker:—I was very glad to see your article in *The Free Christian* for July. I have read it several times, seeking to apprehend your meaning in several statements, and must confess that I cannot. I have applied to several readers for help, and find that they are as much perplexed as I am. This may arise out of our obtuseness, or the fact that you gave there "the results rather than the processes" of your thinking. Be that as it may, you see our dilemma. I am satisfied that you wish to be understood, and hope that under the circumstances you will excuse me for applying to you for assistance. I would have done so sooner only I thought that you had questions enough to consider before the end of the year; and now, if you will kindly reply to the undernoted it would be of great service to many readers, and would help to elucidate the truth, which we both value highly. To facilitate reference, the divisional headings are repeated under which the statements quoted are found.

Yours, very truly,

Joseph Moffitt.

"THE NATURE OF MAN."

1. "Man is an immortal essence." "It must be said of all men that they are mortal." "Man is not immortal in his own nature."

What is the difference between man's "essence" and his "nature"? How can man be both "mortal" and "immortal" at the same time?

2. "The personal form in which it (man's true and inmost self) seeks expression may be unworthy of it, and therefore not abiding."

In what other form than that which is "personal" can man "express" himself?

3. "The personality known to us, and which acquires a self-con-

sciousness of its own, insomuch that it becomes the character in which the man thinks of and knows himself, may die."

What other "self-consciousness" has man in addition to that of his "personality"?

4. "Of these two I's the awakened soul becomes conscious."

Of which "two"? Only one "I" has been disclosed so far.

5. "Reconciliation between the two theories of man's nature must therefore be sought in this distinction between that in man which is individual and that which is personal."

What is the difference between human "personality" and human "individuality"? How can there be perfect human personality without perfect human individuality, and *vice versa?*

6. "As made in the divine image and as being of a divine nature, he must finally reach the end of his creation."

Does it follow that because man was made in the "divine image" he was made of a "divine nature."?

7. "The constant teaching of the Bible that the end f the wicked is destruction will, therefore, find its explanation in this inevitable destruction of these imperfect and perishable forms of being which are but the outward man within which the true being of man is encased."

Is the "wicked" man merely an "outward" form without any inward counterpart? If so, how can any man be wicked in thought or feeling? If not, how can the destruction of merely the outward "form" be the destruction of the "man"?

These first seven questions upon "The Nature of Man" are related to each other, and they each involve the validity of the distinction we have drawn between that which is "individual" in man and that which is "personal." As we have frequently explained, our use of the term personal differs from the common usage. We prefer the term "individual" as defining that element in man's being which survives all changes. The primary meaning of the word is "that which cannot be divided." We, therefore, properly apply it to the essential man, while "person" defines, rather, man as objectively expressed.

Now man, as made in God's image, we believe to be *essentially* divine. His life also is from God. "In Him we live and move and have our being." But in the whole kingdom of nature and in all its realms of life, the principle prevails that life in its manifestations is progressive. It advances through lower stages and imperfect forms to final and complete expression. We have insisted that this law applies also to man, and that his future destiny is shaped in accordance with it. Perfect man is a being still in process of creation. The idea or the image of this perfect manhood lies at the root of every man's being. And this we have described as the true and inmost self of man, and as giving to him an individuality which survives all changes. In the "natural man" this true self is hidden; it remains sub-conscious. In the "spiritual man," the consciousness of this diviner self has been evoked, and the man discerns that he is something more than a sensual being, and that he has aspirations and affinities connecting him with God. In St. Paul's writings the distinction between the two spheres of man's being is most plainly recognized. He speaks of the "inward man" and the "outward man," the natural man and the spiritual. And to each of these he applies the term "I." Each one of these has self-consciousness. "I do the things which I would not." One "I" is subject to the law of sin in his members. The other "I" protests and seeks after God.

Now to this objective man, who is under the yoke of this present system of the world, and who moves and acts in its sphere, we attach the term personality. Our correspondent's objections (for such his inquiries really are) all resolve themselves into this—that we use the term "man"

in a double sense, that we sometimes speak of the essential man as the man himself, and as immortal, and at other times we apply the term "man" to the man known to our senses, and whose self-consciousness lies in the sphere of external things. To which we reply that for this Paul himself is our authority. Language is too meagre, and (as we freely admit), our knowledge of these mysteries is too partial to insure perfect accuracy in definition. But if man is the complex being we have described, then we have a right to say that on the divine side of his being he is "of an immortal essence" (our friend in quoting us omits the preposition "of"), and on the human side he is mortal. When, therefore, we say "Man is not immortal in his own nature," we have in mind the objective man who has been built up out of the elements of nature through the energy of the divine life within him, but the form and trend of whose being has been cramped and distorted by hostile influences, and who is therefore unfit to be a permanent dwelling-place for God.

Mr. Moffitt is right in assuming that perfect individuality requires perfect personality, but he fails to see that this goal may not be reached at once. The very idea of man is that he is to finally become an individualized image of God. When this expression becomes complete, the final personality is reached; the spiritualized body of man becomes the eternal dwelling-place of God. But through all this process the change in the *essential* man is only one of growth and manifestation. The change in the *existent* man may be radical and revolutionary. Qualities that entered into his personality which were evil must be exposed and eradicated. These may so predomi-

nate in a wicked man as to require the destruction of the whole objective existence—that is, of the person—insomuch that the man becomes lost to himself and is cast away. Therefore we have strenuously insisted that "personal continuity of being goes with character." So far as the objective region of our lives has been pervaded and controlled by the Spirit of Christ, so far they will furnish material for that enduring personality in which we shall stand before God forever. And in this principle we find scope for all the retributive teaching of Scripture, and also the highest motives to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

It remains to say that when we speak of "these imperfect and perishable personalities" as the outward man, we do not mean to imply that there is no inward counterpart. Man is made up of body, soul, and spirit. It is only spirit that is essential and indestructible. Intermediate between spirit and body is the soul. This soul is not only part of the objective man of whom we have been speaking; it is the determining factor in the external being. The body expresses the soul. And therefore the wickedness of any man lies first in the region of thought and feeling. The destruction of personality is a destruction of both body and soul. This, as we have seen, may be complete in the case of the very depraved man, or it may be partial if the soul possess still some traits of virtue and goodness.

Mr. Moffitt also reviews our remarks upon

ATONEMENT.

8. "The atonement of Christ makes no provision for the remission of sin's penalties."

How many "penalties" of sin are there? Is the word "atonement"

used here as the equivalent of the word "propitiation" in the New Testament? If so, what other "provision" has been made for the "remission" of sin's penalty?

9. "What is remitted are not penalties, but the sins which make penalty necessary. No man escapes the consequences of his sins except as he is enabled, through the life of Christ, operative in him, to put his sins away."

Is there no difference between the "penalty" of sin and the "consequences" of sin? How can "sin" be remitted without remitting the "penalty" of sin? How can a dead man be raised to life without remitting the penalty of sin—death? Or, how can the life of Christ be operative in any man while he is dead?

10. "Man's redemption consists in the fact that, in the energy of this Christ life, he is brought safely through this crisis of death into the life eternal which lies beyond it."

How can a "dead" man ever "live" again, if he has, himself, to exhaust the penalty of sin—death? Or how can he ever be "brought through" the crisis of death if he "never lives" again?

This series of questions is also so connected that the answer to one involves the answer to another. Our reply to them is:

1. We do regard the terms atonement and propitiation as equivalents.

2. There is but one penalty of sin, which is death. But this is inclusive of minor penalties. Every act of wrong-doing has its penalty. The sorrows and humiliation brought upon David through Absalom were direct penalties for his sins in the matter of Uriah, and this in the face of the word of the prophet Nathan, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." God's forgiveness never violates the principle—"He will by no means clear the guilty." We have, therefore, to say:

3. That there is no such thing possible in the divine government as the remission of sin's penalties, except so

far as sin itself is put away and the necessity for penalty removed. We started out in our remarks upon Atonement with this incontestable principle, that the government of God is absolutely righteous and loving. It is inconceivable that any penalties could be imposed under such a government but such as are absolutely just and good. There is no possible room, therefore, for their remission.

4. The penalty of death is no exception to this principle. It is neither set aside nor revoked. Man suffers death for sin, so far as man can die. We have asserted that there is a divine element in his being which cannot die. It lies at the root of his being, and because of it man is the offspring of God. This essential man, therefore, cannot sin, and needs no remission. "Whatsoever is begotten out of God sinneth not." It is the *existent* man who sins and dies.

Mr. Moffitt asks: "How can a dead man ever live again if he has himself to exhaust the penalty of sin and death?" We reply that if the death of a man be the complete thing he views it to be, then no man, once dead, could ever live again. What sins in man and what dies in man is that which is personal—not the divine essence which is the indestructible ground-work of his being. Take this away and there is nothing in man to be recalled out of the wreck of death.

5. The work of Christ Jesus in atonement was not to save the sinful personality into which man has been built up on the ground-work of his being, but to emphasize its need of death, to hand it over to judgment and death, and so to clear the ground for the ingrafting on to the divine

root in man's being a new personality and to develop it into a perfect manhood. Man, therefore, as we know him, and as he knows himself, is not saved from death, the penalty of sin, at all. On the other hand, he is consigned to it. And on the eternal foundation of Himself in every man God builds up a new manhood in Christ Jesus, a true son of man and son of God. No law, therefore, is set aside in this divine proceeding, no penalty or penalties are remitted; sin is put away by the putting away of the whole evil structure in which it is intrenched. Nothing is saved of the old personality but such features of it as have come under the transforming power of the Spirit of God, and which may, therefore, be used as material for the new structure, which must properly express and be the vehicle of the life of God.

The remaining questions relate to our teaching that the human race is

One Organism.

11. "The human race is so constituted that the living and the dead are bound together in one organism."

Is the "one organism" here literal or figurative? If the human race were only one organism literally, how could there be any individual responsibility?

12. "They each (the generations of mankind) inherit the infirmities and evils of those that preceded them, so that in bearing their iniquities they may also work out their deliverance."

How can any generation of mankind who have inherited the evils of their predecessors work out their own deliverance? If they cannot work out their own deliverance, how can they work out that of their predecessors? Have they not to be delivered from the evils which they have inherited before they can work out any deliverance at all?

The principle of organic union between the individual members of a nation, or of the race, is frequently recognized

in Scripture. When Paul speaks of the Church as one living body, of which each believer is a member in particular, and compares their functions to those of the human body, does any one suspect that he thereby denies to each particular member individual responsibility? The real difficulty here we imagine to be in the assertion that the dead constitute with the living the one body of humanity. But this principle is recognized in Scripture. Is not Adam, in whom "all died," still a member of the human family? Do not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still constitute a part of the nation of Israel, to be blessed with it in its final blessing? We have admitted that to carry out this view, and to make good all the Scriptures which teach this corporate union, it is necessary to suppose that the vanished existences of these dead retain some kind of connection with those of the living. We are not yet able to explain what this connection is, but the idea of it is not more startling than are the surprising wonders which are all the time being disclosed to us in the realms of nature and of life. The old idea in physics was that no two substances can occupy the same space at the same time. And yet now we are told that all space and all bodies are pervaded by a subtle ether which is as hard as steel, and yet infinitely tenuous, so that all substances move through it without resistance. If other senses were opened up in man, he would probably perceive other universes of being in with and under the universe of which he takes cognizance. There is nothing therefore unreasonable in the view that a spiritual universe lies in with and under the material, and that imperfect spirits of the dead are held within this sphere of the living in order to recovery to embodied life in

manhood. Nor is there anything unreasonable in the supposition that the living suffer under the burden of their sins and infirmities, and that victory on their part over these may inure to the benefit of the dead. Mr. Moffitt assumes that the living cannot work out their own deliverance, and therefore can do nothing for the dead. We do not, of course, imagine that any man can set himself free from this ancestral burden, or from the consequences of his own vices, except as the power of God works in him to this end. Our sufficiency is wholly of Him.

The whole difficulty between Mr. Moffitt and us lies in the fact, that he throughout regards us as attributing to the existent man what we affirm only of the essential man. He may, perhaps, not admit with us that man is divine in the essence of his being, and believe that only regeneration makes him so. Our view is, that what makes him capable of regeneration is that he has in him the germ of a divine nature which cannot die, which is receptive of the life of God, and which must finally take on the form of a son of God.

GHOST-LORE.

There seems to be at present a marked revival of interest in stories of apparitions and other spiritualistic phenomena, about which the human mind must always be concerned as bearing on the question of a future life. The Society for Psychical Research is gathering a large mass of facts from which it hopes to arrive at some conclusions which will be reliable, and stepping-stones to further progress. A recent number of *The Review of Reviews,* of which over a

hundred thousand copies were sold, was filled with similar recitals. Quite a number of books and magazine articles are being written in the interest of this general subject. Even scientific men are exploring the borders of this debatable land in their experiments with hypnotism and telepathy, while the spirit-circles and trance-mediums seem to be as abundant as ever.

It is thus a significant fact, that while a materialistic science seemed to be about ready to banish from the world all faith in God and in a future life for man, the human mind asserts its refusal of such dreary and despairing philosophy in ways, which, however grotesque and still unverified, are yet emphatic and prophetic.

These fresh and persistent attempts to lift the veil show how ineradicable from the human breast is the faith and hope of things unseen; and they testify to the fact that the things which lie behind that veil are real, and that they will before long be disclosed.

What should be the attitude of the Christian toward this revived interest in such investigations?

In the first place, he should be aware of the great dangers which surround one in the attempt to explore these mysteries. The Bible utters many warnings against these perils. Necromancy, resort unto them that have familiar spirits, was most severely denounced in the Mosaic law. Our Lord gave warning against the evil spirits who seek opportunity to infest the bodies and souls of men, and a marked feature of His healing ministry was to deliver men from their power. That we are liable both to bodily disorder and mental obscuration and deception from this source is most plainly taught in the New Testament.

We must also be on guard against any doctrine or revelation that in any way impugns the authority of Scripture, or derogates from the honor of that Name which the Christian holds in reverence above every other name. Here comes in the warning of St. John: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God, and this is the spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world."

And yet, on the other hand, we must not assume such an attitude as involves the denial of the reality of spiritual beings, and of the unseen world. We sometimes hear even Christians speak of these subjects in a way that leads to the logical denial of even the spiritualistic phenomena of the New Testament. It is there recorded that evil spirits do possess men, speaking through their lips and producing violent disorders of body and mind. We have sometimes been divided between a feeling of indignation and of contempt at the cool assumption with which modern science dismisses the "old superstition of demoniacal possession" as an explanation of insanity, because forsooth it has discovered that it is always attended with certain changes in cellular nerve tissue; just as if such a material change necessarily excludes the assumption of some deeper spiritual cause. We must be careful to hold fast to the truth of the existence of such spiritual agents. And we must be equally sure that there are good angels—ministering

spirits to the heirs of salvation. We have heretofore stated the grounds upon which we believe that a sainted class from the human race have already risen into the rank of the highest form of spiritual being—the glorified manhood of Christ. Others may be in lower stages of progress to this high estate. But that, of those who have gone before us, there are many who are now our defenders and helpers in this battle of life we are confident. We all confess this as concerning the Head. Why should we deny it of the members of His body through which the Head performs His ministries of power and grace? We cannot, therefore, assume any attitude on this subject which virtually denies that the invisible realm about us is peopled with spiritual beings, the most powerful class of whom are our own guardians and friends. Nor dare we assert that all avenues of communication between them and us are closed. Nor can we forget that the whole drift and energy of that divine operation in and for mankind, which began with the resurrection of Jesus, is toward this very end—the opening up of the now hidden channels of intercourse between the natural and the spiritual worlds, between earth and heaven. "Hereafter ye shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." The closing chapters of the Bible depict this marriage between earth and heaven.

It is quite possible, yea, it is to be expected that, as that day draws near, there will be increasing activity along the border line that separates these regions. Counterfeit presentments of spiritual verities may be expected to be multiplied, so artful as to deceive, if possible, the very elect. And, on the other hand, we may expect increasing glimpses

of the true wonders that there lie hidden, as the veil that hides them grows more thin. While we reject the false we must be careful not to blind ourselves to the true.

There are those indeed who believe that the darkness must grow more dense, and that the opening up of the spiritual world can only come by the sudden descent of the now absent Christ through the parted clouds. But such interpreters mistake, we think, the symbolism in such Scripture language for the substance. We see no reason why the uniform law of development in all divine operations should not prevail here also. Development indeed does not exclude crisis. Transformations are sudden when everything is ripe for change. But a ripening implies previous growth and progress. And so we are to view all the changes and activities around us as part of the ripening process by which all things are being made ready. And therefore we are not to be surprised—we are to expect—that the barriers that now shut us out from things unseen, and bar the access to us of agencies from the spiritual realm shall show signs of breaking down, and that some glimpses will be afforded of things that lie behind the veil. In the early days of Christianity such foretastes of unseen things were viewed as the normal accompaniment of the new light that had come to the world from heaven. We now look upon them as miracles confined to that era. But they were due to the same divine and eternal energy that is ever operating in all nature, and in all life. If we had the early faith, it would remove mountains that shut us out from such fellowship with the invisible world, and open up for us and in us the secrets of life and of power that lie hidden there.

THE DIVINE LOVE.—It is the universal quality and attribute of the Divine Love that it seeks to impart itself and its immortal blessedness to everything; and the condition of receiving it is to be willing to receive it, to desire it, to hold the soul passively open and upward toward it, and to believe and trust that it *is* saving us. Fichte has truly said, "that we must already be in a certain sense that which we would become, in order to become so." Desire of more and better life is its commencement. Hence Jesus affirms, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth" (Matt. vii, 7). This is absolutely true. The reason, the cause, the hidden spring of our asking for more life, or for any spiritual good, is because we have it in a degree already. We must recognize the truth and reality of this. And since belief or faith is the ground of all reality, as everything is real to us in the same proportion as we believe it, we come into actual possession and mental appropriation of it by faith only. God can give us nothing except through faith. Hence Jesus says: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe* that ye receive, and ye shall *have*" (Mark xi, 24). The faith is the reality of the thing itself, for faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hence it is not only philosophically reasonable, but absolutely certain from one of the deepest laws of our being that the prayer of *faith* shall save the sick. And this is no departure from the laws of our nature; in other words, no miracle, but only the operation of a higher law, for in the realm of spirit what is viewed as supernatural by the psychical mind or man, becomes there perfectly natural.—*W. F. Evans in "Esoteric Christianity."*

A CONTRAST.

We have recently been interested in reading a brief history of the life and times of Cotton Mather, who, nearly two centuries ago, was the most influential Puritan-Preacher in Boston. The most influential preacher in the Boston of to-day is doubtless Phillips Brooks. In reading of those old days, one is forced to reflect upon the contrast between the theology and the type of Christian living then prevalent and that of these days. Cotton Mather was a stern and rigid Calvinist, holding that out of the reprobate mass of mankind only the elect were saved, and that it was the one great business of life to discover the evidences of one's election and then to make that calling and election sure. The elect class, also, in his view, was the only class who had the right of rule in this world. Hence, the Puritan's attempt to establish the ideal state in the form of a theocracy, in which men like Mather were the vicegerents of God. And the right and duty of the state to gather out the things that offend and to destroy the works of the devil was illustrated in the zeal of the authorities of that day, urged on by Cotton Mather, to extirpate witchcraft. The story of the inquisition and execution of many persons at Salem and elsewhere, who were believed to be thus possessed, is a well-known and marked feature of those days. It almost seems like a nemesis when we read of the disappointments and domestic troubles through which Mather was compelled to pass in the later years of life; his oldest son, on whom his heart and hopes were set, turning out a reprobate, and his third

and last wife, seeming to be herself, at times, almost possessed with an evil spirit.

And yet we cannot but greatly admire the sturdy devotion to truth as they conceived it, the self-sacrifice, the fidelity to conscience and to duty, the lofty aims and ideals of those old Puritans, from whose virtues—transmitted as a heritage to their descendants—the state and social life of New England still derive many of their best and most enduring elements. What is most missed to-day in the social system which these men founded is their stern devotion to duty, their commanding interest in great spiritual realities, their determination not to sacrifice the future for the sake of ill-gotten gains and pleasures in the present.

Nevertheless, who would be willing to exchange our present for that stern past? Those men believed in a God, sovereign indeed, and yet arbitrary and vindictive, a large part of the human family cut off from any fatherly or loving relation to Him and doomed to an eternal hell. Their human sympathies were thus shut up in narrow channels. The skies above them were covered with a pall, the shadow of a curse rested on the earth, and especially on its highest creatures made in God's image. The struggle of the human mind to break through the fetters of this dark and degrading doctrine of God and of man has been attended with dangers—no good is ever won without risk—but the gain has been immense, and it will, in the end, be proved that the atmosphere of hope and high expectation is vastly more favorable to the progress of the human race God-ward, in righteousness and purity, than was the old environment of gloom and despair.

It has seemed to us that science must remain agnostic in regard to a future life, and all aid from this source to faith continue to be withheld, until the principle that underlies the doctrine of reincarnation be recognized. At the same time we are by no means sure that the *form* in which this doctrine has been held, or in which we have sought to adapt it to the Christian faith, is the final truth on this subject. In fact, it is certain that we "know only in part and prophesy in part." And wherein we fail to know, our hope is in the promise that "God will reveal even this to you."

If the whole creation groans and travails for the manifestation of the sons of God, why should it be thought incredible that we who are now joined to Christ should have to carry our part of the burden of lifting up into resurrection life our brothers, especially of our own kindred, who have fallen by the way.

The Solidarity of the Race.—We have read with great pleasure Mr. Henry Wood's article in the February *Arena* on this subject. At several points his ideas are similar to those we have set forth in this magazine, and it is a gratification to have this evidence that such ideas are spreading and command such able advocacy. We recommend our readers to obtain and read this article in full. But, for the benefit of those who may not have this privilege, we subjoin the following extracts:

Life is a continuous divine communication. While it appears broken into a vast number of disjointed fragments there is but One Life. It is the material and false sense

which gives it the aspect of independent units. The true life is a derived, shared, and related consciousness. Without any loss of individual responsibility each one belongs to the race, which, as a whole, would be incomplete without him. . . .

The ultimate acme of humanity is universal brotherhood. This will not be attained by means of any new departure in sociology, perfected legislation, or ideal political economy, but from a higher consciousness which will fuse and unify heart and character. . . .

Should we then be discouraged in our efforts for individual advancement? No; for in a sense every man is the race. While in the lower realm of mind personalities are mainly expressive, in the future, individual attainment is race potentiality. The foremost member in his progress toward the divine-human ideal represents a veritable race achievement.

Our ideas of human brotherhood are often limited to the present generation, but it includes all who have gone before, and all who will come after. Without affirming the doctrine of metempsychosis, or reincarnation, there is a sense in which we have lived before the present life. Forms of life come and go, but life, in its essence, being in and of God, is without beginning or ending. We shall be spiritually intertwined and incarnated in those yet to come. The race, past, present, and future is one organism. For it, as well as ourselves, we are thinking, willing, acting, and loving. The Scriptures teach that the fathers still live in the children, and that their transgressions, and, still more, their attainments, are shared by them, and science confirms the statement. Rightly understood, the seeming hard law of "the survival of the fittest" is found to be beneficent, for the fittest become channels of blessing to those who are less fit. . . .

Human personality has been so deeply engaged in working out its *own* salvation that it has overlooked its organic relations. Dogmatic theology has iterated and reiterated

the injunction, "Save your *own* soul," but the most ideal salvation is the forgetfulness of the "own soul" in devotion to the general soul. The very essence of salvation is the death of selfishness. . . .

The spiritual victories gained on this arena of life and renewed, generation by generation, are grand in their scope and significance. We wrestle with principalities and powers, and that in the presence of a cloud of interested witnesses. The sorrows and trials of one are those of all, and the triumphs of each are a general inspiration. If the soul currents do not flow from within outwards they become stagnant. Dogmatic theology, which conceives of salvation as a "plan," has largely lost the consciousness of that "bond of the Spirit" which held the primitive Church in a loving fellowship. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus taught that character and ministry, and not creed, formed the basis for the heavenly condition. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. . . . Being members one of another, the ties of common interest and destiny stretch out both backward and forward. Paul, in speaking of his tribulations, affirms that he was being "baptized for the dead." We suffer from limitations and burdens which past generations, through the channels of ancestral life, have imposed upon us. In like manner the present generation is engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict, not merely for itself, but for a coming brotherhood, even down to the distant æons of the future. . . . .

The conquest of the Head is the conquest of every member. Every brother in whom the Christly nature becomes incarnated gives an upward impulse along all the innumerable lines which radiate from him as a centre. He is a savior, who breaks captive chains, takes off shackles, opens prison doors, and proclaims freedom. . . . Missionary effort among the heathen will be largely barren so long as they are taught that there is an inseparable wall between them and their ancestral dead. Their views of

the solidarity of interest between themselves and other generations, in many cases, are in advance of so-called Christian nations. A reasonable and practical spiritual religion which would recognize the loving fellowship which binds them to their kindred who have gone before, would powerfully appeal to the "divine image" which is latent in every darkened heathen soul.

In the unfolding of life on this planet, human souls seem to have been evolved from the plane of animal life below us, and each of these, by a process of re-birth, advances along the human plane until prepared to rise to the spiritual plane. All ethnologists agree that lower orders of mankind existed on the earth for many thousands of years before the Adamic age. The process of preparing human souls to "bear the image of the heavenly" reaches far back into primeval ages, and it must go on until, by "suffering in the flesh," they learn to "cease from sin." But God's scale of time is not like ours, and there is a vast universe to be peopled with sons of God.

When the veil is taken from before our eyes, we shall probably see that in the depths of humanity as now constituted, and on the arena of this earthly life, our Risen Lord is now carrying on His work of resurrection and judgment, that, in the debased and degraded bodies of our fellow-man souls are now bound and in hades—some of them, too, suffering severe torments—that saints who are now fighting the good fight of faith are contending not only for themselves, but for some of their fallen kindred or brethren who have gone before them, and that risen saints behind the veil are our helpers and guardians in the conflict.

THE NEW BIRTH "of the Spirit," and the "coming of the kingdom," are known by the awakening of a new order of affection in the soul, drawing the heart toward God and man through inward "fellowship"—fellowship with the Father, and with the Son of man, as representative of that broad humanity which includes all souls. "Now we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."—*Prof. John F. Weir in The Way.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

THE REVISED CONFESSION.—The report of the Committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to revise the Confession and to propose the changes to be submitted to the Church have finished their report, and it is now published in full. The Committee have done the best they could to harmonize in one statement two discordant systems, but the result is rather a melancholy one. It makes but a piece of patchwork after all, in which the Arminian new cloth fits in but awkwardly to the Calvinistic old garment.

The doctrine of the Divine Decree is enlarged by the declaration that God

"Hath predestined an innumerable multitude of mankind unto life" who are "particularly and unchangeably chosen in Christ, out of His mere free grace and love, not on account of any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving Him thereunto, and all to the praise of His glorious grace."

The doctrine of reprobation is retained, although in softened and qualifying terms.

The rest of mankind God saw fit, according to the unsearchable counsel of His will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth not to elect unto everlasting life, and them hath He ordained to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice; yet hath He no pleasure in the death of the

wicked, nor is it His decree, but the wickedness of their own hearts, which restraineth and hindereth them from accepting the free offer of His grace made in the Gospel.

Other chapters follow, in which the freedom of the human will and the universal offer of the Gospel is asserted in such terms as throw the responsibility of the sinner's perdition upon himself; although it is also stated that "man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all disposition to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, he is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto." All infants and imbeciles and possibly the devout heathen are swept in to help make up the "innumerable multitude" of the elect in these terms:

"Infants dying in infancy, and all other persons not guilty of actual transgression, are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are not outwardly called by the Word."

From all which it is plain that no greater blessing could come to the large majority of those who are born into the world than that they should die in infancy.

We are firm believers in the salvation of infants and of all the other classes of unfortunates whose cases this section is designed to cover, but it dishonors all the Scripture teaching concerning election, and degrades the whole idea of it, to include all these classes among the elect and Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. The whole work of the Committee, indeed, is vitiated by their failure to apprehend this subject of election. They seem blind to the truth, which stands out so plain on the pages of Scripture, that the very purpose of the election is that they may become the channels of God's bounty to the world. Even when Jesus said: "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me," the prayer had respect to this ultimate end "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." It is an increasing surprise to us that men so intelligent, and pledged to defend the truth, should so persistently refuse to admit that the "first fruits of God's creatures," begotten "of His own

will by the word of His truth" (Jas. i, 18), implies that there are later fruits. What is the meaning of first fruits if there is to be no harvest? or of first-born if there are to be no later born? We presume the Committee will still retain the stock proof-text of the old Confession, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. ix, 13), but do they not know that Isaac pronounced a lower blessing upon Esau, and that we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi, 20) that *by faith* Isaac blessed *both* Jacob and Esau concerning things to come? And must they so linger over the ninth of Romans as to refuse to rise to the broad outlook of the eleventh, where we are told that, beyond "the remnant according to the election of grace" which God always preserved in Israel, there was a hidden purpose of blessing for the whole, insomuch that all "All Israel shall be saved," and that "His mercy upon all" should overflow even to all the Gentiles?

But the saddest part of the Committee's report is that part where we read concerning the chapters "Of the state of man after death, and of the Resurrection of the dead" and "Of the last judgment," —"there is no change in these chapters." The doctrine that the wicked, after their resurrection, are to be "cast into eternal torments" is thus retained as the settled faith of the Church. We have so often set forth in this magazine the reasons why we regard this conception of resurrection as fundamentally wrong and viciously destructive of the true knowledge of God and of the gospel of His grace, that it is unnecessary to go over the ground again. We are convinced that all the existing dissatisfaction with the Confession takes its rise just here, in its misconception of the place and meaning of this foundation fact in the Christian faith—the resurrection of the dead. All this tribulation over election and sovereignty and free will and the fate of the heathen could never have arisen, had the framers of that Confession grasped the meaning of the purpose and provision of God to raise the dead. To say that they failed here is to say that they did not understand the gospel. The revisers have tried to supply their lack, and to find hooks upon which they might fasten the gospel into their framework. But the issue will be a lamentable failure so long as they retain those sections in which the first principle of the gospel

is denied. The old perversion of it is perpetuated, and no careful compounding will help them to get rid of, or even conceal, this fly in their new pot of ointment.

Inspiration.—The Rev. A. J. F. Behrends, D. D., says in a recent sermon:

"We should not forget that in all the ferment of human thought, especially in the Church of Christ, the Holy Spirit has His part. Let us repeat together that clause in our common creed: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' We believe in an inspiration of original utterance, unique alike in degree and kind. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But there is also a divine guidance for the readers and thinkers and preachers of the present. The divine tuition has not ceased, and so we may be sure that a better knowledge will be the outcome of the fiercest debates. The history of the past abundantly proves this, and with God's hand upon the lever, there can be no jumping from the track."

Baptism for the Dead.—It would be amusing, were the subject not so serious a one, to observe the absurd and impotent attempts constantly made by professed Christian teachers to escape the plain meaning of this expression of St. Paul. Its meaning, as gathered from the context, is "If the dead rise not, why then should I be undergoing this baptism of suffering in their behalf? How can my endurance be of any advantage to them, if they are not to be raised? Why stand I in jeopardy every hour?" The reason this plain interpretation does not suggest itself is that the truth seems to have died out of the Church that the condition of the dead can be changed; and the thought of such a thing as their rescue through the fidelity of the living would at once bear the brand of heresy.

And hence men go on proposing such wriggling attempts at explanation as this latest one by a writer in the *New York Churchman* of February 13th:

"Since, if the dead rise not, Christ is not raised; and if He be not raised, ye are nothing but dead, in every sense 'dead'; nothing can be more absurd and contradictory than your practice of baptism."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

So MANY of our correspondents have referred, either by way of inquiry or of criticism to some of our recent remarks upon the subject of reincarnation, that we have to say in the way of general reply that the *ground* of our teaching has been throughout the redemptive character of resurrection. We have not, therefore, "shifted our ground." The change has been in respect to the *mode* of that inferior resurrection which Scripture assigns to the unjust. In respect to the true and higher order of resurrection—that of the just—no such question can arise.

All admit that the resurrection of the ungodly cannot be of the same order as that of the righteous. The point we have made is that, as it cannot be to the heavenly order of manhood, it must be to the earthly, for Scripture makes mention of no other than these two. This involves—whether it be on this earth or some other—reincarnation.

We still hold, however, to a period of suffering for sinful souls in hades before death is completed by the destruction of the soul in hell (Matt. x, 28). This suffering is not probation but retribution. The soul, however, is not the inmost self of man. It pertains to the expression of the man, to personality. Its destruction is therefore "the second death" of man; it carries with it the objective man and his self-consciousness developed on that plane of being. The experiment of building a fit temple for the divine image in the man has to be begun afresh. Here comes in the necessity for reincarnation. The former man has been lost to view in the destruction which has dissolved his being, the Scripture symbol of which is the lake of fire.

That all imperfect souls must experience this destructive process, except such as are in conscious union with Christ, we do not affirm. Cornelius was not a "saint" before Peter showed to him the way of life. We have shown on another page that the psychic realm of being on its lowest plane touches earth. It may be that it is only those entering that realm on the lower planes who gravitate back to another life on earth, and that those on higher planes persist in that form of being until prepared for the spirit-

ual. This would provide for the case of infants, devout heathen, and others.

But that the principle of reincarnation has place somewhere under the Christian scheme is obvious, for

1. The doctrine of resurrection, as presented in Scripture, is broad enough to require it. There must be grades in the future embodied life of man according to character. An earthly sensual soul can be reclothed only in the kind of body suited to it. We know of no other kind of body that fulfills these conditions except the one familiar to us. And it contains possibilities for every degree of imprisonment, of suffering, and of corruption. It therefore provides for every form of judgment and correction.

2. No other explanation than this fits in so well with the constant teaching of Scripture that redemption is by a seed, and flows in the channel of successive generations.

3. No other adapts itself so readily to the truths concerning the origin and progress of life which Science has opened up, and which those who investigate the proofs almost universally accept.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

The subjoined letter is from a brother beloved in the Presbyterian ministry. We accept his words both of approval, and where they approach to gentle remonstrance, as coming from a truly Christian soul touched with the finest sensibilities, and we give to our readers the benefit of the impression which such a letter is fitted to produce, both in respect to the things which it commends and those about which it hesitates and speaks with caution:

"My Dear Friend:—If it is not too much to ask, I want you to put the mildest construction upon my long silence, to wit, that it was at most but a very unbusinesslike failure to renew subscription at the right time, and in no wise to be interpreted as waning regard for yourself, or failing interest in your work. It is *impossible* to feel any *less* interest in the matters to which your magazine is devoted. They gather interest of a momentous character with every added year of one's life. I have read the monthly issues as they came, generally at a sitting. There is no number but contains suggestions concerning which I could write by the volume, and should like to talk by the hour. I have watched the new courses into which your thought has been led with keen interest.

Years ago I suppose it would have been impossible to anticipate the precise lines along which the WORDS OF RECONCILIATION is now moving. And yet I think the progress has been normal and unbroken, and I cannot say that you are not holding in your hand the same string by which from the first you have been threading the labyrinth. I think the departure from the original standpoint has been that of progressiveness and not of contradiction. And yet, I think you must feel more and more the loneliness that besets the way of the specialist in Science, physical or theological. I hope it is not necessary to assure you that whatever you think and write will always possess a great interest for me, because it comes from and belongs to yourself, and because in so much you have been a valued help to me. But I feel that, more and more, the path of wisdom must have a narrow one, 'with here and there a traveler.'

"Perhaps this seems so, because I see so few people, and so seldom have the opportunity to exchange views or test to what extent these subjects may be stirring in the hearts of those all around us.

"I don't know that I can characterize my own attitude to the magazine from the first until now. I have not tried to do so—in words—or even in thought. But it seems to me that it varies somewhat in relation to the later teachings.

"The first part was a sharing of open secrets, though for the most part unconsidered truth in the Bible; and of such a nature that when pointed at, the reasonable conscience subscribes and the conviction is, that this is *true*, however theologians or councils have failed to set it forth, or have even been against it. So it is with regard to the elective provision, and the hope of *mankind* through the resurrection of our adorable Saviour.

"I believe there are more 'with ears to hear' *these* things than formerly, even within the seven years that your work has covered. For myself, to *see* was to *believe* these truths.

"With regard to the late developments touching reincarnation, etc., everything does not seem so 'borne upon' my mind. I am better prepared to say 'I see' than 'I believe.' Of course there is no hurry; of course belief is not made to order, comes not by forcing. (I am beginning to think how foolish it was to begin *writing* about all this—a most hopeless undertaking!) Wonderfully plausible and full of subtle suggestions that cause sympathetic vibrations in our consciousness, seeming to gather corroboration from countless facts within and around us: answering to so much, moreover, that is astir in the hearts of men, and that speaks out of all current literature, essay, and fiction, and withal fascinating to the imagination.

"I feel that once broached, this theory of things will stay, until its mission be accomplished. But my own attitude toward it is not yet of acceptance or rejection. Sometimes I think I had bet-

ter stop here—for the present, like one who knows there are 'many things' to be told—but who 'cannot bear' them. Sometimes I feel as though there may be after all an esoteric lore which had best not be published—for that men are not prepared for it, myself among the number. Then (for such are the strange contradictions we encounter in ourselves) I reflect how strange that I should be advocating the *suppression* in any form of what is true! Elliot Cares, who is high up among the theosophs in this country, in an article written for general readers, gives what apparently he means to be a solemn warning against the average man trying to pry into the secrets of theosophy, and repeatedly uses the phrase 'that way lies madness.'

"I could not help thinking of it, while reading the article 'Decay of Faith' in the January number. I should think that the things characterized in Mr. Rose's article, unless, as you suggest, strongly marshaled by a master belief in Christ the Son of Man, the Root of humanity (as Maurice is always calling Him) would stir a tempest of delirium in any soul. In this connection I think your work is altogether unique, and I am with you in praying that it may continue ever under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

"Have you sometimes read an essay on the eye or ear, until you trembled almost for those delicate organs, and felt that it was almost perilous to expose the one to light, or the other to sound? Life is a fearful and wonderful thing, even to the most superficial reader and thinker; even to the man who has not gone beyond the conviction that the saving of *his own* soul is the one great business of it all! But how is this enhanced by the thought that we are every day taking up the unfinished business of previous lives, and preparing material to be wrought into the texture of succeeding ones! What more than this could tend to prostrate a man on his face with the prayer (with regard to his own involved life), 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, Thy name known and hallowed,' and with regard to his own judgment, 'Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus.' Years ago, reading one of Macdonald's books, I was impressed with the suggestion that one of the characters was endowed, in trust, with an evil disposition, the fruit of an ancestor's transgression, *committed* to him for rectification by the grace of God, the rectifying to *react* in some way upon the proprietor of the misused life.

"Much that you have written lately is in this line, it seems to me. It strongly accentuates the solemnity, the preciousness of life.

"Carried home to the heart of any man, it will, so far from relieving him from a sense of individual responsibility, wake him up to a realizing sense of what belongs to a member of a body.

"Verily, more than ever, no man liveth unto himself and no man dieth to himself."